

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SOFIA 00290 141125Z

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ETRD EEWT BU

SUBJECT: BULGARIAN FOREIGN TRADE IN 1976

REF: A. SOFIA 0262 B. SOFIA 0219 C. SOFIA 0098

1. USING FIGURES PUBLISHED IN YEAR-END RESULTS ARTICLE
(REFTEL A) EMBASSY HAS CALCULATED ESTIMATES OF
BULGARIAN TRADE WITH CEMA AND NON-CEMA TRADING GROUPS
FOR 1976.

2. NON-CEMA TRADE. GOB FIGURES INDICATE THAT EXPORTS
TO NON-CEMA COUNTRIES WERE UP BY 13.1 PERCENT AND
IMPORTS FROM THESE COUNTRIES WERE DOWN BY 15.3 PERCENT.
USING THESE AND 1975 FIGURES FOR FOREIGN TRADE WITH
NON-CEMA AREA, EMBASSY ESTIMATES THAT 1976 EXPORTS TO
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PAGE 02 SOFIA 00290 141125Z

NON-CEMA COUNTRIES WERE APPROXIMATELY 1,000 MILLION LEVA.
(ONE LEV EQUALS \$1.06) IMPORTS ESTIMATED TO BE 1,189
MILLION LEVA. TOTAL DEFICIT TRADE WITH NON-COMMUNIST WORLD
WOULD THEN BE 189 MILLION LEVA OR APPROXIMATELY 200 MILLION
DOLLARS.

3. CEMA TRADE. BULGARIAN EXPORTS WERE UP 14.9 PERCENT

WHILE IMPORTS INCREASED 10.2 PERCENT. AGAIN USING 1975 FIGURES, EMBASSY ESTIMATES 1976 BULGARIAN EXPORTS TO CEMA COUNTRIES TO BE 4,115 MILLION LEVA AND IMPORTS TO BE 4,132 MILLION LEVA. NET DEFICIT IS THUS ABOUT 17 MILLION LEVA.

4. COMMENT: BULGARIAN FIGURES FOR CHANGES IN OVERALL IMPORT-EXPORT COMPOSITION OF NON-COMMUNIST TRADE ROUGHLY CORRESPOND WITH EMBASSY INFORMATION GATHERED FROM OTHER EMBASSIES IN SOFIA. FIGURES ALSO CORRESPOND WITH THOSE GIVEN BY THEN FIRST DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE, KHRISTO KHRISTOV (REF B), ALTHOUGH HIS WERE ABOUT FIVE PERCENT HIGHER IN EACH CASE. KHRISTOV FIGURES WOULD INDICATE A WESTERN DEFICIT OF ONLY ABOUT 79 MILLION LEVA, WHICH EMBASSY BELIEVES IS TOO LOW.

5. CEMA TRADE FIGURES ARE IN SOME WAYS EVEN MORE SURPRISING THAN NON-CEMA FIGURES. ACCORDING TO PUBLISHED STATISTICS FROM COMMERCIAL (NON-BULGARIAN) SOURCES, BULGARIA HAD SUBSTANTIAL DEFICITS IN CEMA TRADE FOR BOTH 1974 AND 1975. 1977 SOVIET TRADE PROTOCOL (REF C) ALSO INDICATES THAT BULGARIA WILL HAVE DEFICIT WITH RESPECT TO USSR., WHICH TRADE ACCOUNTS FOR OVER ONE HALF OF TOTAL TURNOVER. THAT 1976 CEMA TRADE SHOULD BE SO MUCH MORE BALANCED IS SURPRISING IF NOT SUSPECT. IF TRUE, HOWEVER, IT WOULD INDICATE THAT BULGARIA HAS CERTAINLY FARED BETTER IN CEMA PRICE REVISIONS THAN ITS COMMUNIST BROTHERS.

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PAGE 03 SOFIA 00290 141125Z

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